



NEW YEAR AND NEW THEME!

In Paul's closing remarks to the Philippians, he gives a list of instructions, one of them being this: 'Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again, Rejoice!' (4:4). He seemed to know that they (and us!) needed an additional reminder. It's like he's saying, 'For real! Whatever the circumstances. Whether you feel like it or not. Rejoice!'

And we do need that reminder, don't we? Many of us have been in ministry for a long time. And sometimes, what once felt like a joy, feels like work. Many have faced painful trials that have shifted our focus, making us weary in doing good.

Maybe the call to rejoice feels far from where you are. Maybe it feels like another way that you are failing or another thing on your never ending to-do list.

But rest assured. Wherever you are, this theme can be for you. Because the call to rejoice is not a call to fake it. It's not a call to plaster a smile on your face or dance around and cheer. The other notable thing about the Philippians 4:4 verse is that there is a clear call in who we are to rejoice in. 'Rejoice in the Lord'. The call to rejoice, is a call to run back into the arms of God. It is a call to glance at our Saviour and remember all that He is and all that He has done.

So as we focus on rejoicing this year, we will share practical disciplines on how to do it and try some of these out together. But ultimately our hope is that this is a year to come back to our first love and be captured by Him again! And as we gaze into beautiful face, the response that flows out of us is rejoicing.

4. Philippians 4:4 makes it clear who we are to be rejoicing in - 'Rejoice **in the Lord**', not our own works. This can be a blurry line for us. We want to celebrate what God is doing so we share stories with friends and donors. We want other churches to sign up to teach TCT so we share about what an impactful program it is.

What is the difference between rejoicing in our own efforts and rejoicing in the Lord?

5. Anna shared Psalm 105. Read this passage again. There is no limit to our God and therefore no limit to the things we can rejoice in.

What stands out to you from this passage? Share one attribute of God that you want to rejoice in this week.

6. The Psalms are full of calls to rejoice. Read Psalm 5:11, 13:5, 31:7, 33:21, 89:16. What did the Psalmists rejoice in? How do these verses influence your view of rejoicing?

How do these verses help us understand the command to rejoice always?

7. When God answered Hannah's prayer for a child, she sings a song of rejoicing to God. Read 1 Samuel 1:27-2:8. What can we learn about rejoicing from Hannah's prayer?